Self-Enhancing Self-Presentation: Interpersonal, Relational, and Organizational Implications

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In F. Guay, D. M. McInerney, R. Craven, & H. W. Marsh (Eds.), *Self-concept, motivation and identity: Underpinning success with research and practice* (pp. 29-55). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Word count (text & references, excluding title page): 10522

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Most individuals have an unduly high estimation of themselves. They privately believe in their intrinsic merit: they are competent, likeable, moral, attractive. In short, they are "worth it" (as a certain *L'Oreal* commercial would put it). And they are worth it a bit more than their doppelgänger. This is indeed the essence of self-enhancement. People regard themselves more favorably than they view others, than others view them, or than objective criteria ascertain (Alicke & Sedikides, 2011).

Privately holding self-enhancing beliefs is associated with higher levels of psychological health (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Dufner et al., 2012; Dufner, Reitz, & Zander, in press; O'Mara, Gaertner, Sedikides, Zhou, & Liu, 2012). But what happens when these beliefs are expressed in public or when an audience infers them? Is the self-enhancer better off or in trouble? And what are the consequences for others? We are concerned with *self-enhancing self-presentation* (SESP) and its social (i.e., interpersonal, relational, organizational) benefits and costs. As an exemplar of one form of SESP with complex relationships to benefits and costs, we deal with narcissism in depth in the latter part of the chapter.

Self-Enhancing Self-Presentation

Self-presentation is an inherent quality of social interaction (Goffman, 1959). Indeed, self-presentation in the form of biographical narratives, social anecdotes, gossip, or social media posts may constitute over 70% of conversational content (Dayter, 2014; Dunbar, Duncan, & Marriott, 1997; Emler, 1994). Clearly, social behavior is, to a great degree, self-presentation.

Individuals are often motivated to present themselves in a way that maximizes desirable outcomes for them (e.g., material compensations, social approval, friendship, career advancement, status, self-esteem; Leary & Kowalski 1990). They may pursue this goal through an array of tactics (Gibson & Sachau, 2000; Hewitt & Stokes, 1975; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, & Tedeschi, 1999). Examples include *ingratiation* (trying to make oneself liked), *intimidation* (projecting the potential to be powerful or dangerous), *supplication* (displaying weakness to gain compassion or assistance), *sandbagging* (creating low performance expectations though false claims of inability), *self-*

handicapping (preparing the ground for external attributions for failure by obstructing one's own performance), *excuse-making* (denying responsibility for wrongdoings), and *disclaimers* (explaining problems before they are expected to occur). We focus on a more general tactic: presenting a positive self-image to others. This tactic, which we call *SESP*, has also been labelled enhancement (Schlenker, 1980), entitlement (claiming responsibility for desirable outcomes; Tedeschi & Lindskold, 1976), self-promotion (displaying one's abilities; Jones & Pittman, 1982), and self-exemplification (presenting oneself as morally good).

We would like to highlight a crucial difference between actual self-enhancement and SESP. The former describes the tendency to privately maintain a positive self-view, whereas the latter describes a tendency to create the impression that one exceeds their actual ability. An example of SESP would be a person who is moderately intelligent, but nevertheless presents himself as highly intelligent. SESP is often a consequence of actual self-enhancement in the sense that positive self-views can be conveyed to observers (von Hippel & Trivers, 2011). In this case, our fictional person would truly believe in his intelligence and broadcast this positive self-view to others. Yet, SESP is not necessarily rooted in actual self-enhancement. It is possible that individuals present a favorable image of themselves without actually believing in it (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008).

The Double-Edged Sword of SESP

How effective is SESP? Specifically, to what extent are self-enhancers viewed favorably or unfavorably by their intended audience and under what circumstances? Moreover, what are the aftermaths of observer impressions for the self-enhancer? The relevant literature is intricate and sometimes contradictory (Hoorens, 2011; Leary, 1995; Schlenker & Leary, 1982; Schlenker, 2012; Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2007). We turn to a review of it, with the aim to clarify it and derive practical implications.

We address the issue of SESP effectiveness largely from the perspective of the basic dimensions of warmth/likeability or communion and competence or agency (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008). We discuss whether individuals who present themselves as warm/likeable are liked particularly well and whether those who present

themselves as competent are viewed as such. Are SESPers met with favorable or unfavorable audience reactions?

SESP and Favorable Feedback

A sizeable part of the literature indicates that SESPers are often viewed favorably. Miller, Cooke, Tsang, and Morgan (1992, Study 1) found that actors who engaged in SESP were viewed as more competent, but not necessarily as more likeable, than those who self-deprecated. Carver, Kus, and Scheier (1994) reported that observers were more willing to interact with a person who, in an interview, self-enhanced (i.e., presented an optimistic outlook) rather than self-deprecated (i.e., presented a pessimistic outlook) or was neutral (i.e., presented a balanced outlook) about their future. Helweg-Larsen, Sadeghian, and Webb (2002) replicated this pattern. Participants were more willing to interact with someone who claimed that he was less (vs. more) likely than others to experience negative events, but were equally willing to interact with someone who claimed that he was as likely as others to experience such events. In the same vein, Le Barbenchon, Milhabet, Steiner, and Priolo (2008) showed that participants were more willing to interact with a person who displayed moderate or strong (compared to weak) personal optimism.

SESP appears to be effective in job interviews. Participants who took the role of a recruiter and judged applicants on the basis of video-taped selection interviews rated a self-enhancing (vs. non self-enhancing) applicant more positively, stated that they would be more likely to hire him, and were more willing to invite him for a follow-up interview (Proost, Schreurs, De Witte, & Derous, 2010). SESPers in this case may have appeared overconfident (i.e., conveying the impression that they ranked high in the group). Indeed, overconfident actors are perceived as more competent than they truly are (Kennedy, Anderson, & Moore, 2013). More generally, SESPers at job interviews are seen as more competent but not as more likeable than non-SESPers (Dipboye & Wiley, 1977; Higgins & Judge, 2004).

The apparent effectiveness of SESP may be partially due to the correspondence bias (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Observers routinely, if not spontaneously, draw inferences about presenters' traits (Vonk, 1999) and often conclude that the presenters' claims reflect their true personality dispositions (Gurevitch, 1984). Consistent with this proposition, participants

judged a person (i.e., actor) who proclaimed expectations for above average performance in a tennis tournament or on an exam as both more competent and more likable compared to a person who expressed average or below average expectations (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Similarly, participants judged an actor who pronounced above average problem-solving ability as more intelligent than an actor who admitted below average ability (Vonk, 1999).

SESP and Unfavorable Feedback

A portion of the literature indicates that SESP may elicit unfavourable reactions. Gordon (1996) reported in a meta-analysis that individuals who present themselves as likable are liked better when they engage in other-enhancement, opinion conformity, or self-deprecating displays. They are disliked, however, when they engage in promotion of their competence.

Godfrey, Jones, and Lord (1986) clarified these findings. Pairs of participants conversed twice for 20 minutes each on a topic of their own choosing. In the first conversation, participants got to know each other. In the second conversation, which occurred a week later, one member of each pair was randomly assigned to the role of "presenter", the other to the role of "target". One-third of presenters were instructed to make themselves as likeable to the target as possible, and another third to appear to the target as competent as possible. The remaining presenters received no instructions. Following both the first and second conversation, pair members rated each other on likability and competence. Targets judged presenters who strove to make a likeable impression as more likable, but not as more competent, after the second conversation than after the first one. Targets judged presenters who strove to make a competent impression as no more competent, but as less likable, after the second conversation than after the first one.

Subsequent videotape analyses revealed that presenters who received "liking" instructions spent more time listening than talking, agreed more often with targets' opinions, and used a great deal more ingratiation strategies (e.g., paying the partner an occasional compliment, showing interest by smiling and nodding, identifying similarities, pointing to common acquaintances) during the second than during the first conversation. Presenters who received "competence" instructions controlled the conversation by being more talkative and

less agreeable, touted their achievements, evaded topics relevant to the targets' areas of expertise, and strove verbally and non-verbally to appear confident (e.g., by sitting up straight). Such self-oriented and non-ingratiating behaviors explain why these presenters were judged as relatively dislikable. However, even when self-enhancing presenters succeed in coming across as competent, they may be seen as socially unappealing (Powers & Zuroff, 1988) or undesirable dating partners (Van Tongeren, Davis, & Hook, 2014).

SESP may involve internal attributions for success. In research by Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, and Cialdini (1996), participants read a vignette describing the way a company employee reacted to the news of a productivity award and congratulatory remarks. The employee's reaction was *self-enhancing* ("Thanks […] I just knew I would win") suggesting entitlement, *neutral* ("Thanks, I heard about it unofficially this morning"), or *modest* ("Thanks, but I think I was mostly lucky") suggesting the contribution of external factors. Participants were least favorable to the self-enhancing employee.

SESP may also involve avoidance of personal responsibility for failure. Observers dislike actors who eschew (compared to those who endorse) responsibility for their failures (Carlston & Shovar, 1983). Forsyth, Berger, and Mitchell (1981) tested the generalizability of this finding by examining how group members respond to another member's claim about his personal responsibility for failed group performance. The other member claimed strong responsibility (he contributed more than other members), equal responsibility (he contributed as much as others), or weak responsibility (he contributed minimally). Members who claimed weak (vs. equal or strong) responsibility for failure were evaluated less favorably.

Reconciling the Divergent Effects of SESP

Our review so far suggests a resolution to the paradox of mixed SESP perceptions: SESP is viewed favorably in the domain of competence, but unfavorably in the domain of likeability. Yet, this is not the whole story. Beliefs about the desirability of SESP, and accompanying observer reactions to it, depend on the conversational context in which SESP occurs, the verifiability and intentionality of SESP, cultural norms prescribing how people in general and members of social groups in particular ought to present themselves, how SESP is

expressed, and whether SESP reflects true versus perceived self-enhancement. We address these issues in turn.

Conversational Context of SESP

Contextual cues affect the nature, extent, and likelihood of SESP. For example, actors scale their self-aggrandizing statements to match those of another person (Vorauer & Miller, 1997) and describe themselves more favorably when they know that observes have evaluated them as above average than as average or below average (Gergen & Wishnov, 1965). They also engage in more SESP when they receive (bogus) feedback that they are likely to outperform others than being outperformed by others (Schlenker, 1975). Furthermore, reality constraints curb the positivity of self-presentations. For example, actors make more positive self-presentations to strangers than to friends (Tice, Butler, Muraven, & Stillwell, 1995).

Context also influences the reception of SESP by an audience. For example, observers form favorable impressions of an actor who, over the course of a conversation with a partner, extols his intellectual prowess in response to specific (rather than general) questions from his partner or in an effort to match (rather than surpass) his partner's favorable self-descriptions (Holtgraves & Srull, 1989). Similarly, actors are evaluated favorably when SESP occurs as a retort to the presence (rather than the absence) of an audience question (Tal-Or, 2010). Finally, whether the context is competitive or cooperative makes a difference. For example, SESP elicits a more favorable reaction in a competitive setting (e.g., job interview) than a cooperative setting (e.g., conversation with friend) (Kruger & Gilovich, 1999, Studies 3-4). Such contextual shifts may be due to norm docility (i.e., obedience) versus violation (i.e., resistance). Self-aggrandizing in response to questions upholds social norms, whereas self-aggrandizing willy-nilly violates social norms.

Cultural Norms Surrounding SESP

Cultural norms may partially determine whether self-enhancing presenters are likely to reap more benefits or endure more costs than their modest counterparts. Schmid, Frauendorfer, and Popovic (2011) examined how the cultural background of job recruiters influenced their evaluation of a job applicant's self-presentational style. The job recruiters originated from cultures whose norms endorsed the acceptability of SESP (i.e., Canada) or

the acceptability of modesty (i.e., Switzerland), and the applicant's style during a job interview was either self-enhancing or modest. Canadian job recruiters were more favorable toward hiring self-enhancing presenters, whereas Swiss job recruiters were more favorable toward hiring modest presenters.

The Schmid et al. (2011) findings suggest that SESP is associated with favorable hiring decisions in cultures that value self-enhancement but not necessarily in cultures that value modesty. Yet, SESP may occur in abundance even in cultures that value modesty. Wu (2011) examined incidences of self-praise in everyday social exchanges in China. On the basis of audiotaped and videotaped conversations, Wu identified three common practices that conversants used when engaging in SESP. Specifically, they disguised their self-praise as a complaint (i.e., complaining about the many duties that a highly prestigious position brings along), modified their self-praise (i.e., by retracting it after first having engaged in it), or disclaimed the possession of a desirable characteristic i.e., by stating that they have done something good but adding that it was not really exceptional). Another demonstration of SESP capitalized on the principle that collectivism (i.e., putting the interests of the group above those of the individual), but not individualism (i.e., putting the interests of the individual above those of the group), is an East-Asian cultural ideal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). East-Asians presented themselves as superior to other group members on collectivistic attributes (e.g., loyal, agreeable, compromising) and behaviors (e.g., follow the rules according to which your group operates, follow confrontation with your group), but not on individualistic attributes (e.g., leader, original, unique) and behaviors (e.g., trust your own instinct rather than the group's instinct, disagree with your group when you believe your group is wrong") (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Vevea, 2005).

Within a given culture, different social norms may dictate the appropriateness of SESP for social groups. Gender is an example: SESP is more acceptable in men than women. A boastful self-disclosure is rated as more masculine than a feminine one (Miller et al., 1992, Study 2). Also, men report using SESP (e.g., self-promotion, boasting their association with high-status others) more frequently than women (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). Moreover,

self-promoting women may come across as more competent than self-effacing women do, but they are also seen as more socially unattractive than self-effacing women or than self-promoting men are (Rudman, 1998). Intriguingly, these views are expressed only by female observers, a results pattern that needs to be replicated before firm inferences are drawn. Regardless, gender differences in SESP may be more pronounced in cultures characterized by larger gender inequality.

Verifiability and Intentionality of SESP

Observers typically do not possess information about the truthfulness of SESP. When they do, though, they are influenced by it. In general, observers lean favorably toward presenters who can match their publicly stated (and positive) expectations with performance (Brickman & Seligman, 1974) and presenters who can put to test their claims of competence (Bond, Kwan, & Li, 2000). If observers have reason to believe that an actor is competent and likeable (e.g., on the basis of her grade point average or scores on a personality test), they evaluate her more favorably when she self-enhances than when she self-derogates. If, on the other hand, observers have reason to believe that an actor is incompetent and unlikeable, they evaluate her more favorably when she self-derogates than when she self-enhances (Jones & Shrauger, 1970). This pattern is qualified, though. If an actor performs outstandingly, observers evaluate her more favorably when her self-presentation is somewhat self-deprecating (i.e., downplaying her performance) than when it is accurate (Brickman & Seligman, 1974; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Accuracy does not always help the acceptability of SESP.

It matters whether observers consider SESP intentional or unintentional. In Lafrenière, Sedikides, Van Tongeren, and Davis (2014, Experiments 1-2), observers read vignettes of an actor who self-enhanced either intentionally (i.e., in a planful or foreseeable manner; Bratman, 1987) or unintentionally. Observers' impressions of the actor differed as a function of her self-enhancement intentionality. They judged the actor as more immoral, unintelligent, and unfriendly when she engaged in SESP (no matter intentionally or unintentionally) rather than accurately (cf. Robinson et al., 1995; Tice et al., 1995; Wosinska et al., 1996). However, they judged the actor as more immoral and unintelligent, but as

equally unfriendly, when she self-enhanced intentionally rather than unintentionally. Observers disapproved of intentional self-enhancement.

Expression of SESP

Robinson, Johnson, and Shields (1995) compared the impressions elicited by highly self-enhancing claims with those elicited by self-deprecating and moderately self-enhancing claims. Observers looked more favorably upon moderately self-enhancing claims than either highly self-enhancing or self-depreciating claims, and they regarded moderately self-enhancing claimants as more likeable, honest, and authentic than their counterparts. These findings suggest that SESP is more effective when subtle than when blatant. Anderson, Brion, Moore, and Kennedy (2012, Study 4) reinforced this conclusion. Following completion of group tasks that involved cooperative responding to questions, observers judged fellow group members as more competent when these group members expressed more (than less) certainty in their answers.

SESP may also differ in linguistic form, such as level of abstraction. Presenters may boast concretely (e.g., performance level) or abstractly (e.g., ability level). A performance claim, due to its here-and-now character, may be more socially acceptable in the eyes of someone who needs to make a proximal decision about the claimant; however, an ability claim, due to its future implications, may be more socially acceptable in the context of a distal decision (Trope & Liberman, 2010). This is what Proost, Germeys, and Schreurs (2012, Study 2) found. Participants assigned to a recruiter role judged an applicant for a job opening that needed to be filled in the proximal or distal future. Recruiters judged a proximal-future applicant more favorably when he described specific than abstract achievements, but judged a distal-future applicant more favorably when he talked about abstract than specific achievements.

Hoorens, Pandelaere, Oldersma, and Sedikides (2012, Experiments 1-7) also examined how the expression of SESP influences observer reactions. Observers read vignettes of actors who self-enhanced either in the communion (i.e., friendship) or agency (i.e., student ability) domain. Specifically, actors made socially comparative self-enhancing claims (“I am a better person to be friends with than others”), socially comparative self-

enhancing claims accompanied by a disclaimer ("I don't mean to say that I am a better person to be friends with than others, but …"), or temporally comparative self-superiority claims ("I am a better person now to be friends with than I was in the past"). Hoorens et al. contrasted observers' reactions to these claims and claimants against observers' reactions to non-comparative self-enhancing claims ("I am a good person to be friends with"), self-equality claims ("I am as good a person to be friends with as others are"), or other-enhancing claims ("she is a better person to be friends with than others"). Finally, Hoorens et al. assessed the inferences that observers made about the claimants' self-view, the claimants' view of others, and the claimants' view of the observer.

Observers disapproved of socially comparative self-enhancing claims and claimants more so than of any other type of claims or claimants. Such disapproval cut across the domains of communion (i.e., friendship) and agency (i.e., student ability) and across settings in which the claim was made (i.e., public vs. private). Observers' condemnation of socially comparative self-enhancing claims was driven by their inference that the claimant viewed other people in general and the observer in particular in an unfavorable light. The inference, then, that the claimant held the observer in contempt accounted for the rejection of the claim (Hoorens et al., 2012, Experiment 7). According to this account, observers rebuffed the socially comparative self-enhancer as a way to protect themselves from the threat that this comparison posed to their self-esteem or mood (Alicke, 2000; Sedikides, 2012). Such a self-protective rejection may have instigated an antagonistic or hostile response toward the claimant (Kowalski, 1997).

Perceived versus Actual Self-Enhancement and SESP

Conflicting findings may be due, at least in part, to the discrepancy between perceived and actual self-enhancement. Dufner, Denissen, and colleagues (2013) defined *perceived self-enhancement* in terms of inferences that an observer makes about actors, their claims, or their performance. These are inferences about actors' private (and positive) views of themselves. As a reminder, *actual self-enhancement* refers to private (and positive) self-views. It is possible that observers are favorably inclined toward actual self-enhancement, which is not

necessarily observable by others, but unfavorably inclined toward perceived self-enhancement.

Do actual and perceived self-enhancement elicit differing impressions? Dufner, Denissen, et al. (2013) assessed separately perceived and actual self-enhancement. To assess actual self-enhancement, they instructed participants (i.e., actors) to take an aptitude test and rate themselves on that aptitude. They derived the actual self-enhancement score by partialing the actual aptitude from the self-rated aptitude. Subsequently, they asked observers to indicate their impressions of actors. Dufner et al assessed perceived self-enhancement through observer inferences about actors' self-views. If self-views were judged as inflated, perceived self-enhancement was high. We will describe these studies below on the basis of actual versus perceived self-enhancement.

In an online survey (Dufner, Denissen, et al., 2013, Study 1), actors completed a verbal intelligence (i.e., vocabulary) test and proceeded to rate themselves on verbal knowledge. Observers (i.e., friends) rated actors on perceived self-enhancement and likability. The more actors engaged in actual self-enhancement, the more they were liked. However, the results for perceived self-enhancement were different. Actors with moderate levels of perceived self-enhancement (i.e., those who were perceived as neither self-enhancing nor self-derogating) were liked better. A follow-up investigation involving a round-robin design replicated these findings (Dufner, Denissen, et al., Study 3). Acquainted participants were randomly assigned to groups and interacted regularly over eight months. Participants rated each other several times on intelligence and likability. They all took an IQ test and provided subjective ratings of their intelligence. The higher actual self-enhancement was, the more favorable observers' impressions were over time. However, moderate, compared to high, perceived self-enhancement evoked more favorable reactions.

Dufner, Denissen, et al. (2013, Study 1) also focused on perceived emotional stability as an outcome variable. Friends judged actual self-enhancers as emotionally stable: the more actors engaged in actual self-enhancement, the more emotionally stable they were deemed. However, friends' judgments of perceived self-enhancers were mixed. They regarded slightly-to-moderately perceived self-enhancers as emotionally stable, but highly perceived

self-enhancers as emotionally unstable. These effects were replicated in the round-robin study (Dufner, Denissen, et al., Study 3). Observers again judged actual self-enhancers as emotionally stable. In addition, they judged moderate perceived self-enhancers as emotionally stable, but high perceived self-enhancers as emotionally unstable. Finally, Dufner, Denissen, et al. (Study 3) looked into perceived social influence as an outcome variable. Observers judged high actual self-enhancers as socially influential. However, they judged perceived self-enhancers as socially influential as well, even at extreme levels of perceived self-enhancement. Interestingly, actual and perceived self-enhancement interacted such that actors with high actual self-enhancement paired with high perceived self-enhancement were deemed as most socially influential.

In all, research by Dufner, Denissen, and colleagues (2013) illustrates that actual and perceived self-enhancement are linked to discrepant social consequences. Actual self-enhancement is linearly related to observer favorability. However, only moderate perceived self-enhancement is linked with favorable observer impressions. High perceived self-enhancement is met with disapproval, although it is seen as influential.

On the Relational and Organizational Implications of SESP

It is often difficult to know whether the results of SESP studies reflect actual versus perceived self-enhancement. We will assume that most such studies reflect perceived self-enhancement for sure, and may or may not reflect actual self-enhancement. We will consequently assume that high levels of SESP (including high levels of narcissism, a personality trait with a strong proclivity to SESP) elicit unfavorable impressions, although they may buy social influence. We discuss interpersonal costs and benefits of SESP in the relational and organizational domains.

Relational Implications

Is SESP associated with, or does it promote, long-term relational liabilities? SESP may be linked with relationship deterioration. For example, some findings suggest that the disruptive behavior of SESPers may contribute to longer-term relational difficulties (Paulhus, 1998). At the same time, there are indications that self-enhancers are capable of maintaining friendships and intimate relationships. For example, intellectual and academic self-

enhancement are longitudinal predictors of peer-rated likability in university work groups and classes (Dufner et al., 2012, in press). Also, self-enhancers may form long-term relationships through complementarity processes, that is, by attracting friends or partners who both admire them and care for them (Campbell, 1999). Self-enhancers may use their relationships for own gain, such as to maintain or enhance their self-conceptions (Sedikides et al., 2002).

Narcissists are a case in point. Narcissism reflects an egocentric, self-aggrandizing, dominant, and manipulative interpersonal orientation or self-presentational style (Morf, Horvath, & Torchetti, 2011; Paulhus, Westlake, Calvez, & Harms, 2013). Narcissists continuously seek admiration from their social environment in order to elevate the positivity of their self-views (Back et al., 2013; Campbell & Campbell, 2009), and SESP seems an appropriate means for this goal. So, what are the relational implications of narcissism? Narcissists report decreased relationship dysfunction in the short term (Campbell, 1999), and report relatively high dyadic adjustment, relationship commitment, and relationship satisfaction in long-term relationships. Are these self-reports reciprocated by partner reports? It would appear that this is the case. For example, narcissists are viewed as physically attractive (Holtzman & Strube, 2010) and are ascribed relatively high mate value, due not only to their perceived physical attractiveness but also to their perceived social boldness (Dufner, Rauthmann, Czarna, & Denissen, 2013b). Narcissists, upon acquaintance, come across as interesting, energetic, competent, well-adjusted, and entertaining (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010; Paulhus, 1998). Also, they create excitement and bring satisfaction in the early stages of the relationship (Foster, Shrira, & Campbell, 20063).

Yet, the weight of the evidence points to a damaging influence of narcissism on long-term relationships. Narcissists are disagreeable and high in need for power (Horton & Sedikides, 2009), are low on empathy or perspective-taking (Hepper, Hart, & Sedikides, 2014), and respond with aggression to criticism (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). Indeed, with increased familiarity, narcissists come to be disliked by their acquaintances (Paulhus, 1998) due to their arrogant and antagonistic behavior (Küfner, Nestler, & Back, 2013). Narcissists regard themselves as superior to their partners (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002), make downward social comparisons toward important others (Krizan & Bushman, 2011), and

occasionally denigrate their partners to preserve their own self-esteem (John & Robins, 1994). Narcissism is associated with low levels of emotional closeness, a game-playing love style, stronger perceptions of romantic alternatives, higher flirting, lower accommodation of relational conflict, and infidelity (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Campbell & Foster, 2002; Foster et al., 2006). In addition, narcissism is related to stronger endorsement of myths and enjoyment of films depicting rape (Bushman, Bonacci, Van Dijk, & Baumeister, 2003), to sexual assault (Bushman et al., 2003), and to serving longer time in prison (Bushman & Baumeister, 2002).

Based on the above-reviewed research, one would expect for the partners of narcissists to be dissatisfied by the relationship. Indeed, evidence indicates so among dating university students (Lam, 2012). Facets of narcissism in the sexual domain exhibit a similar pattern. In particular, three facets (sexual exploitation, sexual entitlement, and low sexual empathy) were negatively linked to marital satisfaction, whereas another facet (sexual skill) was positively linked to marital satisfaction (McNulty & Widman, 2013). Additional research suggests that narcissism is linked to courtship violence (Ryan et al. 2008), domestic violence (Simmons et al. 2005), and spouse-abuse recidivism (Hamberger & Hastings, 1990). On the other hand, narcissism is unrelated to marital satisfaction over the first five years of marriage (McNulty & Widman, 2013). Perhaps some aspects of narcissism (e.g., an overly positive self-view) have beneficial influences on relationship outcomes, whereas other aspects (e.g., tendency to derogate other) have detrimental influences, and in marriages beneficial and detrimental influences cancel each other out (Back et al., 2013).

Organizational Implications

Workplace incivility may hinder the tendency to self-enhance at work and may thus lead to employee disengagement (Chen et al., 2013). Yet, although low and moderate levels of SESP may have functional implications for the workplace (Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, & Fraley, 2013), high levels of it may complicate matters. Narcissistic self-presentation on the part of the employee or the manager provides a fitting example. Given its rising societal levels (Cai, Kwan, & Sedikides, 2012; Twenge & Campbell, 2008), narcissism in organizational or political settings has been emerging as a critical issue (Campbell,

Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011). In the following sections, we discuss the organizational implications of narcissistic employees and managers.

Employee or subordinate self-enhancement. As we discussed, at first narcissists give off positive impressions (Back et al., 2010; Paulhus, 1998). However, impression positivity wanes and gives rise to active disliking, as observers get to know the narcissist better (Czarna, Dufner, & Clifton, 2014; Paulhus, 1998). It follows that the narcissistic employee may come to be seen as a threat to the team (Tannen, 1994). In particular, the employee may be seen as hampering group harmony and obstructing project completion (Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002) through the display of poor interpersonal skills (e.g., excessive self-praise, condescension, antagonism, hostility; Morf & Rhodewalt, 1993).

As a result of organizational distraction, managers may become frustrated at the failure of the narcissistic employee to benefit from constructive or improving feedback (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004, Study 3). Managers may also become frustrated at the narcissistic employee's persistence in putting self-interest above organizational interest. For example, narcissism is positively associated with higher anger at work (Penney & Spector, 2002), increased workplace counterproductive behavior (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012; Penney & Spector, 2002), and tendencies to endorse more unethical practices in sales contexts (Soyer, Rovenpor, & Kopelman, 1999). Such a set of self-defeating behaviors may culminate in workplace ostracism (Smart Richman, & Leary, 2009) and negative career implications (McCall & Lombardo, 1983).

Narcissists can be charming, friendly, and warm (Back et al., 2010; Paulhus, 1998), but not indiscriminately so. Instead, they pursue the formation and consolidation of social alliances with persons that they regard as high status (Campbell, 1999; Horton & Sedikides, 2009). Narcissists, then, may be keen to conceal their indifference or hostility toward managers through a veneer of approach behavior and flattery. For example, narcissists may ingratiate to their manager in an attempt to profit from managerial approval. Consistent with this possibility, high (compared to low) narcissists mimic to a greater degree high-status than low-status others despite not liking better the former than the latter (Ashton-James & Levordashka, 2013). However, such an ingratiation strategy may backfire. Narcissistic

employees may be seen as sycophantic (the "slime effect;" Vonk, 1998), thus making their position in the organization even more untenable. It is possible, of course, that managers value being ingratiated upon by employees. In this case, the narcissists' ingratiation strategy may gain traction with the manager (at least in the short-term) but may be alienating to their colleagues (Ralston, 1985).

Manager or leader self-enhancement. Narcissists may be particularly attracted to leadership positions, given that such positions enable them to achieve the goals of power, admiration, self-esteem, material gains, and access to desirable mates. In a study by Deluga (1997), raters completed the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) on behalf of US presidents, based on relevant biographical descriptions (i.e., content analyses of presidential speeches). US presidents came off as far more narcissistic than the average US student (who is also not short on narcissism; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). This study suggests that narcissists are attracted to, and likely to reach, leadership positions.

Indeed, it would appear that subordinates are likely to perceive narcissistic attributes (e.g., extraversion, self-confidence, success in public performance; Grijalva et al., 2013; Wallace & Baumeister, 2002) as well-suited for leadership positions and may even be prone to elect narcissists to leadership positions. Three studies by Brunell and her colleagues (2008) illustrate this point. Participants (university students in Studies 1-2, business executives in Study 3) responded to the NPI and then became involved in four-person group discussions. Narcissists emerged (i.e., were seen by other group members) as leaders (see also Grijalva et al., 2013).

Follow-up research qualified the Brunell et al. (2008) findings. Pittinsky and Rosenthal (2008) also had small groups engage in discussion, but on repeated occasions. Narcissists emerged as leaders in the initial group interactions, but not in later interactions (cf. Paulhus, 1998). Moreover, Hogan and Hogan (2001) found that narcissistic (i.e., bold or arrogant) leaders were seen as high on self-promotion, sociability, and limit testing, but were seen also as high on likelihood of holding strong opinions, expecting special treatment, and taking advantage of others. Finally, Nevicka, De Hoogh, Van Vianen, and Ten Velden (2013) showed that narcissists were chosen more often as leaders and narcissistic leaders were seen

as more desirable, regardless of whether their liabilities (e.g., arrogance, exploitativeness) were salient or not, but only under conditions of uncertainty (i.e., when the company ostensibly underwent a period of financial instability and losses). This research suggests that narcissists may emerge as leaders especially under conditions of uncertainty, but will likely be met in the long-run with mixed impressions by followers or objective observers.

Researchers have distinguished between leader emergence and leaders effectiveness (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Grijalva et al., 2013). The above described evidence indicates that, at least in the short run, narcissists are likely to emerge as leaders. But do narcissists make effective leaders? Campbell, Bush, Brunell, and Shelton (2005) addressed this question in a commons dilemma paradigm. This entails pitting the individual's short-term interests against the group's long-term interest over the sharing of common resource (e.g., timber). When participants make decisions that serve their short-term interests, the results can be detrimental to the broader community (Hardin, 1968). In the Campbell et al research, undergraduate students assumed the role of a forestry company CEO. Their job was to harvest forests in competition with other forestry companies represented by students in adjacent rooms. Narcissistic CEOs harvested more timber at Time 1 in relation to their competitors. The more those narcissistic CEOs harvested, the more rapidly the forests got depleted and the less timber could be harvested overall. Taken together, narcissistic leadership was effective in the short-run and for the self, but ineffective in the long-run or for the broader society. These findings were corroborated by a recent meta-analysis (Grijalva et al., 2013).

Do narcissists make effective transformational leaders (Campbell et al., 2011)? Transformational leadership is gauged by its impact on followers. It entails the clear communication of a vision encompassing organizational goals, and it aims to inspire followers to alter perceptions, expectations, and motivations toward accomplishing these goals (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership has four components: (a) idealized influence (i.e., provision of a role model that instils pride while gaining trust and respect), (b) inspirational motivation (i.e., articulation of an inspiring vision), (c) intellectual stimulation (i.e., challenge of assumptions, stimulation of creativity, encouragement of problem-solving),

and (d) individualized consideration (i.e., attention to the needs of the followers, mentoring followers).

Deluga (1997) reported that narcissistic U.S. Presidents are deemed more charismatic, which can be considered a component of transformational leadership (i.e., idealized influence). Also, Judge, LePine, and Rich (2006) found a positive association between narcissism and self-ratings of global transformational leadership. Khoo and Burch (2008) did not replicate this pattern. However, fine-grained analyses of their data revealed a positive relation between narcissism and idealized influence, but a negative relation between narcissism and individual consideration. These results suggest that narcissists score high on the charismatic component of transformational leadership, but low on its other-oriented component. Consistent with this finding, narcissistic managers are rated by their superiors as lacking on the interpersonal side of management and on integrity (but as no worse on competence) compared to non-narcissistic managers (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008).

Watts and colleagues (2013) addressed the issue of narcissistic transformational leadership effectiveness based on the histories of 42 US presidents. Narcissistic presidents were more effective in crisis management, agenda setting, and legislative initiatives. However, they were also more frequently the subject of congressional impeachment resolutions and behaved in a more unethical manner. In a similar vein, narcissism is linked to acceptance of workplace deviance (Judge et al., 2006) and to proneness to white-collar crime (Blickle, Schlegel, Fassbender, & Klein, 2006). Stein (2013) used the example of Richard "Dick" Fuld, CEO and chairman of Lehman Brothers from 1994-2008 to illustrate the ups and downs of narcissistic leadership. Under Fuld's headship, this highly fractured company was reunited and throve in regards to market capitalization and net revenue. Fuld was also praised for his decisive response to the 9/11 attacks, which impacted directly upon Lehman Brothers' global headquarters. These may have been the reasons why Fuld's autocratic leadership style, which showed zero tolerance for dissent, was consented by his subordinates. His boldness, arrogance, and risk-proneness, however, led to ruinous financial investments and decisions, resulting in Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy and triggering a global financial crisis.

The Richard "Dick" Fuld case suggests that the effectiveness of narcissistic leadership may be contingent on contextual factors (Campbell & Campbell, 2009). As Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) put it, it is possible that narcissists leaders are effective in domains that require charisma and extraversion (e.g., sales), but ineffective in domains that require the formation and maintenance of relationships and trust (e.g., community projects). Yet, even when charisma is required, narcissistic leadership has the potential to result in follower exploitation and societal calamity as it might have been with several notorious narcissistic leaders (e.g., Charles Manson, Hitler, Mao Tse-tung, Stalin; Conger, 1989; House & Howell, 1992). In all, although narcissists are likely to evoke disarray when they need to maintain a functional order, they may do an acceptable job at establishing a new order (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

Let us examine the above-described possibility more closely. Is narcissistic leadership typically effective when the times call for the establishment of a new order? Transformational or visionary leadership may entail public risks (e.g., large-scale acquisitions or corporate strategy changes). Chatterjee and Hambrick (2007) obtained an estimate of CEOs' narcissism based on a number of indicators (e.g., use of first-person pronouns at interviews, photograph size in corporate reports) and then linked narcissism with corporate performance. CEO narcissism was unrelated to level of corporate performance. However, narcissism was positively linked to corporate performance volatility. Narcissistic CEOs were indulging in huge public risks. Sometimes these risks paid off, other times they did not. However, in financial terms, performance variability is a liability, as it diminishes corporate value; that is, stable performance is considered as more valuable than fluctuating performance, controlling for outcomes. As such, narcissistic leadership had a net negative impact on the corporation. Narcissists may temporarily infuse the organization with energy or purpose, but they do not seem to be particularly effective in establishing a new order.

In all, high levels of SESP, as manifested by narcissists, are associated with organizational upheaval. Narcissistic employees are seen as impeding group harmony and productivity. Narcissistic managers may infuse the organization with excitement in the short run, but inflict relational and financial damage in the long run.

Concluding Remarks

Self-presentation is an integral part of social behavior. One type of self-presentation is SESP. Research indicates that individuals are capable of SESP, especially in the communion domain. Yet, SESP has interpersonal, relational, and organizational implications.

Actual self-enhancement entails mostly favorable consequences. Perceived self-enhancement is met with disapproval, and, those perceived to self-enhance highly are regarded as emotionally unstable and socially unappealing albeit socially influential. Perceived self-enhancers are disliked partly because they are deemed to show contempt for others and predominantly because they are deemed to show contempt for the observer. Context, however, moderates observer disapproval of SESP. For example, SESP is looked upon favorably when it occurs in response to a question, is accompanied by evidence, or is part of a job interview (especially in Western culture). Still at the interpersonal level, actual self-enhancement (i.e., possession of unwarrantedly positive self-views) entails mostly favorable consequences. Actual self-enhancers are liked, and are deemed as emotionally stable as well as socially attractive.

An intriguing case of SESP is narcissism. Narcissists are judged physically attractive and, in the initial stages of acquaintance, as interpersonally appealing. Also, in the initial stages of dating relationships, they are rated as exciting and satisfying partners. However, in later stages of acquaintance or relationships, they are judged as interpersonally unappealing and relationally troublesome.

At the organizational level, narcissism follows similar temporal patterns. Although an employee may be seen as contributing energetically to the organization early on, he or she will likely be seen as undermining morale and productivity in the long-run. Negative consequences may ensue both for the organization and the employee. Narcissistic leaders are also a mixed bag. Because they are seen as socially influential, if not dominant, narcissists are preferred as leaders especially under conditions of uncertainty. Their effectiveness, though, leaves a lot to be desired. Despite occasional early successes, they do not seem to reap viable organizational benefits and instead are liable to generate organizational turmoil.

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